

# Reading Toolkit: Grade 6 Objective 2.A.4.c

Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Informational Text

Indicator 4. Determine and analyze important ideas and messages in informational texts

Objective c. State and support main ideas and messages

Assessment Limits:

The whole text or a portion of the text

The whole text or a portion of the text

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## Lesson Seeds

### Reading Grade 6 Objective 2.A.4.c

#### Activities

- Provide students with informational text/s. Explain to students that they are able to better understand an author's most significant points in written text by identifying the main idea of each paragraph. As students read their individual texts, they are instructed to underline the main ideas or supporting details of at least four different paragraphs. Classroom discussion should lead them to the following conclusions: The main idea may be stated at the beginning, middle, or end of the paragraph. It may also not be directly stated, but suggested by details.
- Provide students an informational passage from which all subheadings have been removed and replaced with numbers. Have students read each section and write a subheading that captures the main idea of that section. Share the subheadings with the entire class to determine their accuracy or appropriateness.
- Teacher will provide students with an informational passage. Before reading provide students with the topic of the text's message. As students read, they should highlight, post note, or record any information relating to the topic. Once reading is complete, discuss with students everything the author says about the topic. From this information conclude the author's message.
- Read an informational passage. After reading is complete, show students a list of statements drawn from the passage which include statements of detail, example, main idea, and message. Have students categorize the statements according to their purpose. Share the results and discuss any conflicts to ensure understanding. Take message statement/s and return to the text to find supporting details.

## Clarification

### Reading Grade 6 Indicator 2.A.4

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will express an understanding of the key points or thoughts in the text, which are **the important ideas and messages**. These are sometimes directly stated in the text, but for more complex texts, a reader will determine the implied, important ideas and messages by synthesizing ideas across the text(s).

In order to understand important ideas or messages in a text, a reader should **determine the author's apparent purpose for writing**. The author's purpose, either implied or directly stated, is the main reason for the text. Most authors write to inform, persuade, or to express personal ideas relative to his or her selected topic. Authors write for different audiences; an author's intended audience should be apparent through the author's choice of topic, diction, organization, and graphic aids. Knowing these features and the intended audience for a text helps a reader determine a purpose for reading, which will enhance a reader's understanding of the text as a whole.

Once a reader understands an author's or text's purpose, he or she can speculate as to **how someone might use the text**. To do so, a reader explores the application of the text to personal or content-specific use. A critical reader applies the text for personal or content specific use and to determine issues and ideas within a text or across texts and their personal and societal implications.

The ability to **distinguish between facts and opinions** is a prerequisite reading skill for **identifying and explaining an author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective**. A fact can be defined as something that can be proven true while an opinion is a belief or feeling about a subject. Authors use a combination of facts and opinions in their writing, most often using facts to support their opinions. Once a reader can identify an author's opinion on a topic, the main idea or message can be more clearly understood. An author's opinion with the evidence, details, and examples used to support the opinion become the **author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective**.

When **stating and supporting main ideas and messages**, a reader must first identify the main idea of the text. To do so, a reader must identify the topic or subject of the text, which is often evident in the title or first paragraph(s) of an informational text. Then, after reading an entire text, a reader must identify the main point that the author/text makes about the topic or subject. The author's message is the same thing as the main idea; however, a message is usually present in more complex, subjective text. A message is often more author-centered, whereas a main idea is more text-centered. If the main idea or message is not directly stated in the text, a reader must use the details and information in the text to infer the main idea or message. A reader supports the main idea or message by using details from the text that relate to it and that help him/her understand the main idea. This process can be done for the entire text or for a small portion of text.

**Summarizing or paraphrasing a text or a portion of a text** is an essential skill for a reader when comprehending informational text. A reader is better able to determine the important ideas and messages in text if he/she is able to summarize it. To do so, a reader must state the main idea in his/her own words and then select only details from the text that contribute to the identified main idea. Paraphrasing, when a reader restates an idea in his or her own words, is a key step to summarizing a text. This can be done for a small portion of text, such as a paragraph, as well as for a chapter or the entire text.

Authors use details and examples in their writing to clarify, highlight, or enhance their ideas. A critical reader will be able to identify **information not related, or peripheral, to the main idea of a text**. Doing so will help a reader disregard redundant as well as extraneous information when summarizing the text or identifying the main idea or message. Especially for complex text, a reader may analyze the effect this extraneous information has on the main idea or message and make decisions or draw conclusions about why an author used that information. This skill is useful as readers develop their own opinions and ideas relative to a text.

When a reader compares and contrasts textual ideas, elements, and features within and across texts, he/she is **identifying relationships between and among ideas**. Authors also organize their ideas to show a sequence of ideas or to show cause and effect. Once a reader identifies a relationship that exists among ideas in a text, he/she can think more analytically about that relationship. A critical reader will also make **connections to prior knowledge**, which are the beliefs or background a reader brings to a text.

In order to **draw conclusions about and make generalizations from informational text**, a reader should first be able to state the main idea as well as to summarize a text. When a reader draws conclusions, he/she uses information from the text—such as the text patterns or text features—that can be either stated or implied. A reader makes a judgment or a decision that is new to him or her since it is not directly stated in the text. A conclusion or generalization is dependent on the information in a text but is external to it.

An ability **to connect text to prior knowledge or experience** helps a reader identify personally with a text. A reader identifies similarities between what is being described, explained, or narrated and what he or she has experienced, heard or read about. A critical reader forms opinions about the content within a text during and after reading and is then able to develop his or her own ideas about information from a text.

As readers have more experiences with these skills and with increasingly complex texts, their cognitive abilities will increase as well. Experienced readers will be able not only to determine a main idea or message, but also to develop skills at **analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating a main idea or message** by making connections to ideas and messages expressed in other texts or to their personal experiences.

## Public Release #1 - Selected Response (SR) Item

Handout(s):

- Alexander Calder
- Alexander Calder

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Read "Alexander Calder" and answer the following question. What is Paragraph 1 of "Alexander Calder" mainly about?

- A. Calder's early years
- B. Calder's life as an artist
- C. The influence of Calder's family
- D. The reasons Calder made mobiles

Correct Answer:

A

## Sample Item #1 Brief Constructed Response (BCR) Item with Annotated Student Responses

### Question

Read the article 'Persistence' and answer the following question.

What other title would help a reader understand the main idea of this passage? Explain how the title you selected will help the reader better understand the main idea of the passage.

### Annotated Student Responses

I think that another title would be I kept trying, because when Paul kept on trying and won the car and rocket race he didn't give up. He also show that he was trying when he was rejected to be an astronaut for 8 years and he finally got accepted. He was persistent in what he wanted.

Annotation: The student suggests an appropriate title "I kept trying" which indicates understanding of a main idea of the article. The response focuses on evidence in the text that supports the title suggested. The student explains that Paul kept trying until he did win the car and rocket races and then kept trying to become an astronaut even though "he was rejected...for 8 years."

Another title I would give this article is Achieving a Goal. I chose this because in the article Paul worked hard on many things to achieve a goal. Some goals he achieved are winning a car race, winning a rocket race, and becoming an astronaut.

Annotation: The student suggests a title, "Achieving a Goal" which reflects understanding of the article but does not focus on a main idea. The student merely lists examples of goals that were achieved, such as winning races and becoming an astronaut. To focus on the main idea of the article, the student could have explained how Paul "worked hard" to succeed in achieving his goals.

## Handouts

### Alexander Calder

By David Markson

<sup>1</sup>Alexander Calder, born in Philadelphia in 1898, became one of America's most famous artists. He came from an artistic family. His father, mother, and grandfather were sculptors and painters. Calder received a degree in engineering from the Stevens Institute of Technology in 1919, and he then became a student of painting in New York. In 1926, Calder moved to Paris. For many years, he traveled between Paris and New York, working in both France and the United States.

Calder is best known for his clever sculptures called "mobiles." A mobile usually hangs from a cable or a string, and it moves when a person or a breeze stirs it. Before Calder, some sculptors had created mobiles that moved because they were powered by motors or in the same ways as clocks. Calder created something different. His mobiles are so perfectly balanced that a light touch can make them move. That is their main feature.

<sup>3</sup>Calder's mobiles also are pleasing to the eye. They are made mostly of pieces of sheet metal that are joined by wires. Calder enjoyed using mainly primary colors, such as bright reds, blues, and yellows, so many of his works look like decorations or toys you might expect to see in a child's nursery.



## Persistence

By Paul W. Richards

Growing up in Dunmore, Penn-sylvania, I was a member of Cub Scout Pack 66. We did many fun projects. One was the Pinewood Derby, a model-car race.

Each Scout made a car from a block of wood. I carved and sanded the wood all by myself. Since my dad did not have many tools, I used a rusty file and some old sandpaper.

My car did not look good. In fact, it was ugly. I tried to cover the scratches and scrapes with paint, but this made it look even worse. I was worried. How would such an ugly car do well?

On race day, many of the other Scouts' cars looked great. I thought I didn't have a chance. Yo my surprise, my car was the fastest, and I won first place!

The next year, I couldn't wait to race in the Pinewood Derby again. This time, I had help from one of my dad's friends. He used power tools to carve the wood into a smooth curved shape. I decorated it using new paints and stickers. I even used a little toy man as a driver. It really looked like a raceacr this time, and I was ready to win first place again.

Unfortunately, I came home disappointed. My car was one of the best-looking cars at the race, but it was also one of the slowest. I lost in the first round.

I never wanted to do another project again. After I had worked so hard to make my car look special, I had still lost.

The next year, my Scout pack had a Space Derby that raced rockets made from blocks of wood. I didn't want to enter, but my mom and dad talked me into it.

I was glad they did. Once I started working on my rocket, I became determined to do my best. This time, I worked as hard sanding and gluing my rocket as I did painting it. I knew now that how it worked was more important than how it looked. Once again, I won first place.

I had learned a valuable lesson, and it had nothing to do with winning. I had learned to be persistent: to keep trying and not to give up. This lesson stayed with me as I grew older.

My childhood dream was to become as astronaut, but people told me it was impossible to achieve that goal. After becoming an engineer, I used persistence to get a job at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. While I was there, I kept applying to become as astronaut. For eight years, I received rejection letters.

Finally in 1996, NASA invited me to Houston, Texas. At last, I had been selected to become an astronaut.

On March 8, 2001, I launched aboard the space shuttle Discovery and worked for 12 days in space. This included a trip to the International Space Station and a space walk.

Without persistence, my dream would never have come true.

## Rubric - Brief Constructed Response (BCR)

### Score 3

The response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text.

- Addresses the demands of the question
- Effectively uses text-relevant<sup>1</sup> information to clarify or extend understanding

### Score 2

The response demonstrates a general understanding of the text.

- Partially addresses the demands of the question
- Uses text-relevant<sup>1</sup> information to show understanding

### Score 1

The response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the text.

- Minimally addresses the demands of the question
- Uses minimal information to show some understanding of the text in relation to the question

### Score 0

The response is completely incorrect, irrelevant to the question, or missing.<sup>2</sup>

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Text-relevant: This information may or may not be an exact copy (quote) of the text but is clearly related to the text and often shows an analysis and/or interpretation of important ideas. Students may incorporate information to show connections to relevant prior experience as appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> An exact copy (quote) or paraphrase of the question that provides no new relevant information will receive a score of "0".

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